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Letter dated 29 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and further to our letter dated 24 March 1999, I have the honour to draw your attention to new violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and of the flight information region (FIR) of Nicosia by military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force, recorded on 23 and 26 March 1999.

On 23 March 1999, one Turkish aircraft of unknown type entered the Nicosia FIR, violating international air traffic regulations.

The aircraft in question violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the area of Mesaoria, landing at 2114 hours at the illegal airport of Tymbou in the occupied area of the Republic, from where it departed at 2139 hours on the same day, exiting towards the Ankara FIR.

On 26 March 1999, 16 military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force (12 F-16, two C-130, one C-160 and one other aircraft of unknown type) entered the Nicosia FIR, violating international air traffic regulations.

The 12 F-16 aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the area of Karpasia before exiting towards the Ankara FIR.

The two C-130 and one C-160 aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying also over the area of Karpasia before exiting in a southeasterly direction.

The aircraft of unknown type violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the area of the Cape of Apostolos Andreas before exiting towards the Ankara FIR.

As stated in my previous letters, these Turkish unauthorized intrusions into the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus are in violation of international air traffic rules, and at the same time are in contravention to the provisions of Security Council resolutions on Cyprus.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to strongly protest these new provocative acts by Turkey, which demonstrate Turkey's blatant disregard of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all the relevant decisions of the Organization on the question of Cyprus.

I would like, once more, to underline that the present violations occurred after the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1217 and 1218 (1998), in which the Council called upon all States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and to refrain from any action which might prejudice that sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. My Government expects that the Turkish side will show compliance with the provisions of these resolutions.

Such provocative actions are not conducive to reducing tension and run counter to the initiative of the Secretary-General announced on 30 September 1998, within the framework of his Mission of Good Offices, with the goal of reducing tensions and promoting progress towards a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus.

Furthermore, the continuing overflights by the Turkish Air Force, as well as the presence of the Turkish military occupation forces on the island, constitute the underlying causes of tension in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotos ZACKHEOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative